

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER
LISTED

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

OCT 10 2007

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A) Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Power Plant #1

Other name/site number 113-3430-0012

2. Location

Street & number 414 West Elizabeth ☐ not for publication

City or town McPherson ☐ vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County McPherson Code 113 Zip code 67460

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Patrick Zollner

8/24/07

Patrick Zollner, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of commenting official /Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- ☐ entered in the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ☐ removed from the National Register
- ☐ other, (explain:)

Power Plant #1
Name of Property

McPherson County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: Public Works

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: CONCRETE
Walls: BRICK

Roof: SYNTHETICS: Rubber; METAL

Other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Power Plant #1

Name of Property

McPherson County, Kansas

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1934-1947

Significant Dates

1934-1947

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Laramore & Douglass, Inc.

Burns & McDonnell Engineering

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Kansas State Historical Society

Power Plant #1
Name of Property

McPherson County, Kansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	4	6	1	6	1	2	0	4	2	4	7	2	6	0
Zone	Easting				Northing										
2															

3															
Zone	Easting				Northing										
4															

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Randle L. Clark, AIA
Organization Clark Architecture & Design Date November 10, 2006
Street & number 902 East 1st Telephone 620-241-4353
City or town McPherson State KS Zip code 67460

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Name McPherson Board of Public Utilities - City of McPherson
Street & number 400 East Kansas Telephone 620-245-2532
City or town McPherson State KS Zip code 67460

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16) U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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Power Plant #1
McPherson, McPherson County, KS

Section Number 7 Page 1

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Power Plant #1 (1934-1947) is located at 414 West Elizabeth three blocks west of McPherson's central business district. The community (population 13,770) is in central Kansas and is the McPherson County seat. The nominated property includes less than one acre that is also occupied by a small well house (non-contributing). This property has been home to McPherson's power plant since at least 1887, according to Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. The current building was erected in phases between 1934 and 1947. The three phases harmonize architecturally to reflect a refined Art Deco style that was common in public buildings throughout the 1930s and 1940s.

Exterior

There is a driveway entrance at the northwest corner of the lot leading from Kansas Avenue. The nominated building is situated on the south portion of the lot and is constructed of concrete, masonry, and steel. The redbrick veneer is moderately detailed with an emphasis on verticality, which is mimicked in the window arrangement. Designed as a power plant, the structure was built to withstand significant vibration, to dissipate heat, and to allow in considerable natural light. The two southern stair-stepped sections of the building were completed in 1936. In 1940, the southern-most section of the building was expanded along the east elevation. Lastly, the substantial northern section, which is the tallest part of the building, was completed in 1947.

The two-story south elevation faces Elizabeth Street and is the earliest portion of the building. This section contains eight bays defined by vertical steel-frame casement windows that are flanked by columns of buff-colored brick laid at a 45-degree angle. The space between the first- and second-story windows is faced with red tile blocks. The smooth-cut stone coping on the parapet is simple and unadorned. The same stone is continued along the base of the building and also accents the single-door entryway. The entry features a three-light transom and an Art Deco-influenced exterior light fixture on either side of the door. A third story is stepped back and features the same vertical characteristics, stone coping, and steel windows.

The west elevation faces the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. The two story section contains four bays that are defined much like that of the south elevation - by vertical steel-frame casement windows flanked by columns of buff-colored brick laid at a 45-degree angle. These columns give the appearance of pilasters. The windows, however, are uninterrupted from the stone base to several feet below the stone parapet. The northernmost bay contains a large garage door with a small 10-light casement window with a stone sill centered above. Again, the third story is stepped back and, like the south elevation, features the same vertical characteristics. The tall four-story section sits flush with the third story section on the north end of this west elevation. Although the columns of buff-colored brick are not executed on this section, the redbrick veneer and columns of steel-frame windows emphasize verticality.

The north elevation, which faces Kansas Avenue (U.S. Highway 56), is comprised only of the four-story section that was built in 1947. This elevation contains seven bays defined by columns of steel-frame

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Power Plant #1
McPherson, McPherson County, KS

windows. The smooth-cut stone coping on the parapet is simple and unadorned and the same stone is continued in the base of the building and the centered double-door entry. The entryway surround is Art Deco-influenced and features period light fixtures on each side. The doors are simple industrial steel doors each with a small square window.

The east elevation is comprised of eight bays. The vertical steel-frame casement windows and stone parapets define each of the three sections, which sit flush with one another extending along one continuous plane. The four-story section contains four bays that mimic the design of the north elevation. The three-story section is somewhat different in that the windows do not extend vertically continuously, but rather are interrupted with stone sills and sections of brick veneer. In addition, this center three-story section with three bays does not feature a stone base like the others. Lastly, the two-story section at the southernmost end of this east elevation mimics the design of the south elevation. Its single bay features a column of steel-frame casement windows. The space between the first- and second-story windows is faced with red tile blocks. The smooth-cut stone coping on the parapet is simple and unadorned.

Interior

The four-story portion of the building is open and maintains an industrial appearance. The walls are finished with a glazed tile, the floor is concrete, and the ceiling features exposed non-insulated steel trusses. Steam boilers and turbines once occupied this portion of the building. The concrete floors were built to withstand the vibration of the turbines. At the southeast corner of this four-story section sits the single remaining turbine whose equipment extends below grade into the basement. The control panels along the south wall of this section along with the small enclosed operator's office have also been retained. There is a pulley/crane system that rolls on a track fixed to the rear wall. At the rear is a stairway leading to the basement, which once housed the boiler systems. With the exception of the one intact system at the southeast corner, they have been removed leaving open areas. These basement spaces are all concrete.

The two- and three-story sections of the building are occupied by offices, break rooms, restrooms, hallways, and stairways. These spaces maintain a 1930s – 1940s appearance with glazed tile walls, metal stairs and railings, and casement windows overlooking the boiler and turbine facility.

Summary

The building retains a high degree of architectural integrity. The industrial nature of the building is reflected in its open space, exposed ceiling, concrete floors, casement windows, and glazed tile walls. The building was taken completely out of service on January 1, 1996. The City of McPherson maintains ownership and is planning to renovate the building to use as offices.

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Power Plant #1
McPherson, McPherson County, KS

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Power Plant #1 (1934-1947) is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its architectural significance as a good local example of the Art Deco style executed on an industrial building. Although this building was erected in phases, its cohesive design reflects a refined Art Deco appearance that was common in public buildings during that time. This location has been home to McPherson's power plant since the late 1800s.

Historical Context

McPherson County was organized in 1870 with 783 inhabitants. The City of McPherson was founded two years later and rapidly grew with the expansion of the Santa Fe and Union Pacific Railroads to the area by 1879. The U.S. Census listed 17,143 residents in McPherson County by 1880. Throughout late 19th and early 20th centuries, the population remained between 21,000 and 25,000 residents. The 2000 Census listed 13,770 people living in the City of McPherson.¹

At the time of the community's founding, the Industrial Revolution had transformed American society and was influencing the developing frontier communities. Prior to this transformation, "craft technology was dominant, depending on hand tools, simple machines, individual skills, and small shop home production." After its impact, however, "powered special-purpose machines" and "high-skill technicians" increasingly became part of the economy.² With the completion of railroad lines, coal became a primary fuel for industrialization on the frontier. "By the 1830s and 1840s the widespread use of cheap coal had many ramifications. It brought an expanding use of steam power and factory production..."³

With a market heavily dependent on agriculture, McPherson experienced rapid change. By 1912, four railroad lines converged at McPherson – the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific, the Missouri Pacific, and the Union Pacific – making this an important shipping point in this part of Kansas. In his book *Kansas: A Cyclopedia of State History*, Frank Blackmar described McPherson as having

...two good hotels, an opera house, 3 flour mills, which are among the largest in the state, 4 grain elevators, ice and cold storage plant, electric plant, fire department, waterworks and sewer system. The streets are wide and well kept and the business blocks are of brick or stone. Main street is lined for several blocks with well appointed retail stores. The town is supplied with telegraphic communications and express offices and has an international money order postoffice with seven rural routes. A board of trade has recently been

¹ "Historical Census Browser," University of Virginia Library. Accessible online at <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/>.

² Brooke Hindle and Steven Lubar, *Engines of Change: The American Industrial Revolution 1790-1860* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1986), 9.

³ *Ibid.*, 107.

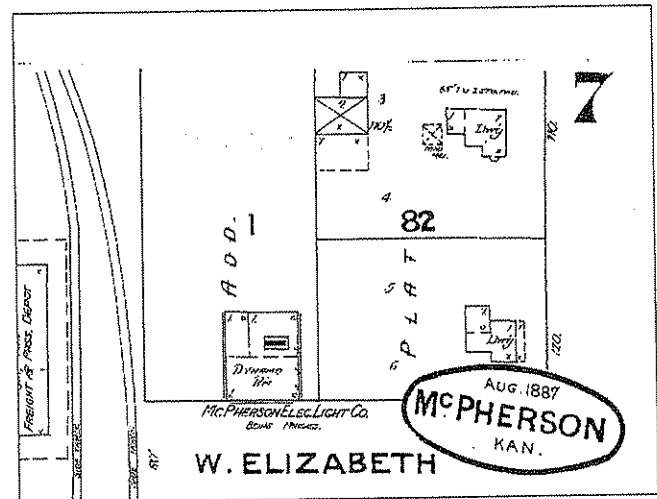
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McPherson, McPherson County, KS

organized and a retail dealers' association has been in operation among the merchants for some years.⁴

Blackmar's early 20th century description suggests McPherson was a sophisticated community with industry, business, and entertainment. This growth relied on power. Using coal for fuel, McPherson's Power Plant #1 produced steam power that served the community. By 1927, the plant had converted to oil as its source of fuel.

Property History

The 1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of McPherson shows a building "being finished" on this lot known as the "McPherson Electric Light Company." The



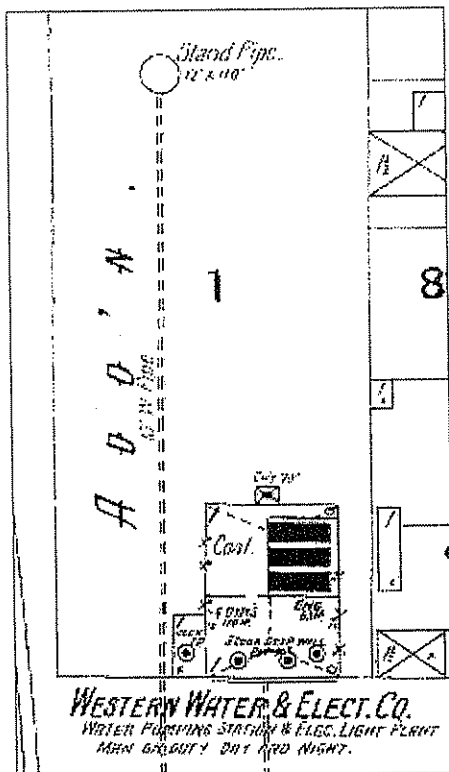
1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

subsequent Sanborn Maps of 1892, 1901, and 1908 illustrate the growth of this plant, which had become known as the "Western Water and Electric Company." While the company occupied the entire west half of the block, the original building fronted Elizabeth Street. By 1892, a standpipe was constructed north of the plant. These early maps also noted that a man was on duty at the facility around the clock.

The building was expanded (or replaced) in the early 1900s and, according to the 1914 Sanborn Map, became known as "McPherson Water and Electric Plant." At this time, three houses occupied the eastern half of the block facing Chestnut Street – a number that would grow to five by 1927.⁵

The southernmost portion of this building was demolished in 1934 and replaced with a new addition by 1936. This addition, which faces Elizabeth Street, was constructed in a refined Art Deco style that perfectly suited the industrial nature of the building. According to the *McPherson Daily Republican*, Foy Construction Company of

Hutchinson received the contract for demolition and reconstruction:



1901 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

⁴ Frank Blackmar, ed., *Kansas: A Cyclopaedia of State History*, with a supplementary volume devoted to selected personal history and reminiscence. (Chicago: Standard Publishing Co., 1912), pp. 204-205 from volume II. Accessible online at <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/genweb/archives/1912/mc/mcpherson.html>.

⁵ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, McPherson, McPherson County, Kansas. 1887, 1892, 1901, 1908, 1914, 1927, 1947.

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Power Plant #1
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Foy Construction Company of Hutchinson has a crew of men started on the remodeling construction work at the city water and electric plant. At the present time a false ceiling, a temporary affair, is being installed in the present building to protect the machinery and equipment while the walls are being carried up for the new roof and ceiling, which will also be the height of the structure in the addition that will enlarge the plant.⁶

The newspaper also notes the company's use of workers enrolled in the Public Works Administration program. "Steel girders are being erected at the light plant, forms are being built and concrete is being run when the weather permits."⁷

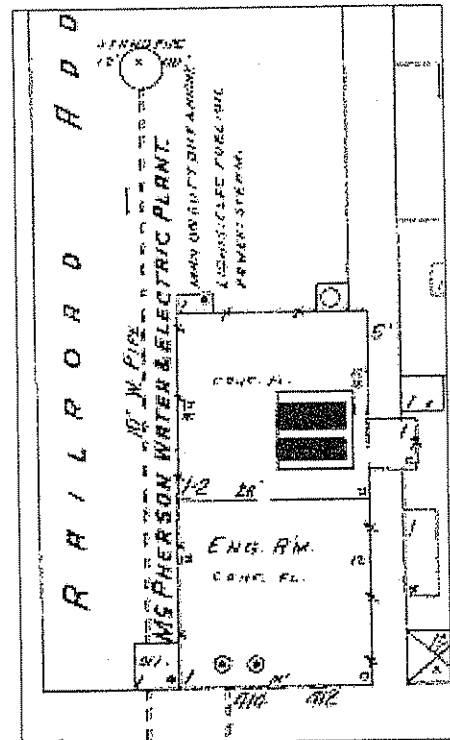
The remainder of the older building was demolished with two more building addition projects in 1940 and 1947. Each of these building additions continued the use of Art Deco architectural elements, which nicely blended the entire structure. By 1947, the house and its ancillary structures that occupied the southeast corner of the block had been demolished. The City of McPherson eventually obtained this land and in 1992 built a water treatment facility that now exists immediately east of the power plant.

Two reputable engineering firms had a role in the design of the new power plant: Burns and McDonnell Engineering of Kansas City and Laramore and Douglass, Inc. of Chicago.

Burns and McDonnell Engineering

Burns and McDonnell Engineering was extensively involved in the design and construction of McPherson's Power Plant #1 – from the early 1930s through the early 1950s.

Clinton S. Burns and Robert E. McDonnell opened an office in Kansas City in 1898 after determining that hundreds of cities within a 200-mile radius of Kansas City lack sanitary sewers, water works and electric lights. They landed their first major project in 1900 – a combined water and light plant in Iola, Kansas. Other projects soon followed in Cherryvale, Osawatomie, St. Marys, and Russell. By 1930, the company had completed more than 1,200 projects in 34 states and Mexico. The firm engineered the Smoky Hill Army Airfield in Salina in 1942, a project that was the first of what would become a long line of aviation-related projects for Burns and McDonnell. Given Salina's close proximity to McPherson, this may be how city leaders learned of the firm. Having completed 2,100 projects worth about \$664 million, the company celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1948.⁸



1927 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

⁶ *McPherson Daily Republican*, 27 October 1934.

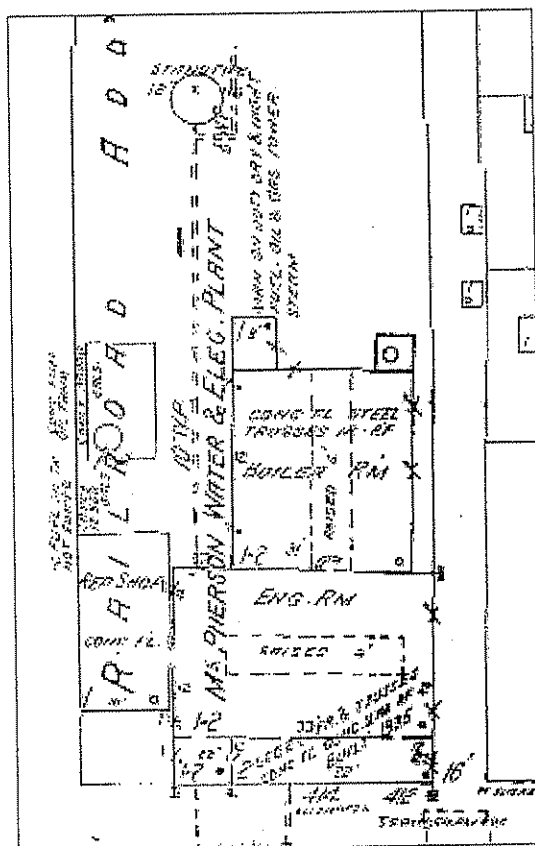
⁷ *McPherson Daily Republican*, 22 January 1935.

⁸ History of Burns & McDonnell Engineering. Available online at www.burnsmcd.com.

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McPherson, McPherson County, KSSection Number 8 Page 6*Laramore and Douglass, Inc.*

Records suggest that Laramore and Douglass, Inc. was contracted for consulting services in the late 1940s and early 1950s. There has been no evidence found that this firm was involved with the earlier projects of the 1930s.

F.E. Laramore and F.S. Douglass were working as Chief Engineers for the Management Engineering Corporation. Between the two of them they had a vast amount of experience in the design and operation of steam electric generating stations, hydroelectric projects, transmission lines, gas plants, and water works. Building on this knowledge, the two men established the consulting firm of Laramore and Douglass in Chicago in 1937. Recognizing the United States' rapidly expanding need for electric power, Laramore and Douglass built an impressive reputation in the design of rural transmission and distribution systems. As the development of rural roads was amplified, L & D designed and supervised construction of numerous steam-electric stations to serve the burgeoning electric power requirements of the agricultural revolution. In small municipal communities, L & D modernized outdated distribution systems and designed steam, diesel and gas turbine stations to meet the substantial post-WWII need for electric power.⁹



1947 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

Summary

The Power Plant #1 played an important role in the development of the community. It served as the primary location for the generation of electric power from the late 1880s through 1996. With its vertical window arrangement, vertical brick detailing, and stylized entrances, the property is locally significant for its reflection of the Art Deco style that was popular in public buildings throughout the 1930s and 1940s.

⁹ History of Laramore and Douglass, Inc. Accessible online at www.ldpgroup.com.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/>.

Laramore and Douglass, Inc. Website. Accessible online at www.ldpgroup.com.

McPherson Daily Republican. 27 October 1934; 22 January 1935.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. McPherson, McPherson County, Kansas. 1887, 1892, 1901, 1908, 1914,
1927, 1947.

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Power Plant #1
McPherson, McPherson County, KS

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the northwest corner of Lot 1, Block 1: then East 119.5', South 300', West 119.5', North 300'. This includes the Power Plant #1 building and a small non-contributing well house.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary includes only the portion of land historically associated with the property. It does *not* include all of the property currently associated with the building.

PHOTOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The following information is applicable to all photos:

Property Name: Power Plant #1
Location: 414 Elizabeth, McPherson, McPherson County, KS
Photographer: Sarah J. Martin
Date: 21 March 2007

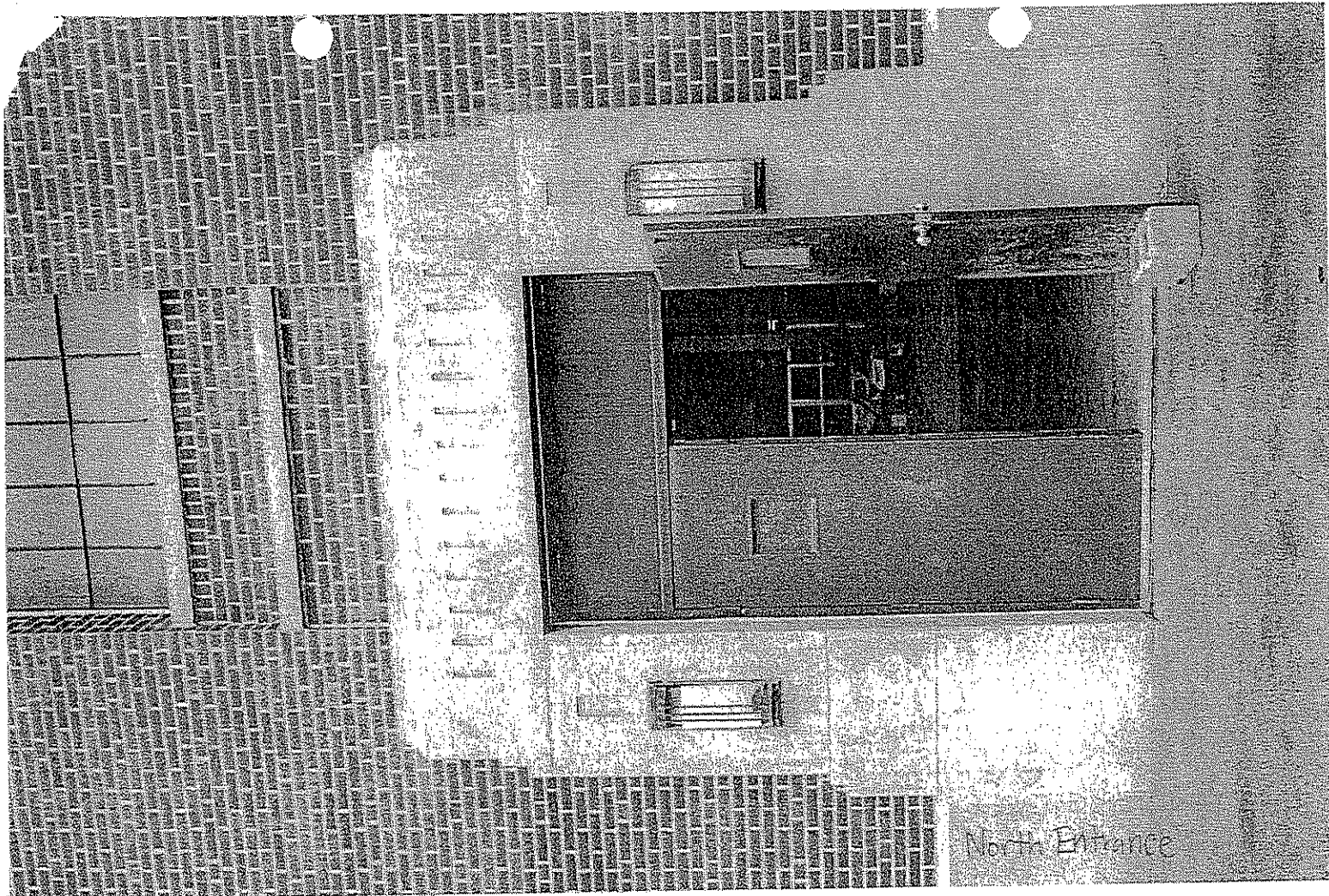
Photo 1: Northeast corner, facing SW
Photo 2: Northeast corner, facing SW
Photo 3: Southwest corner, facing NE
Photo 4: North elevation, facing S
Photo 5: North entrance close-up, facing S
Photo 6: North entrance, facing S
Photo 7: West elevation, close-up
Photo 8: Interior of 1947 section, facing NE
Photo 9: Interior of 1947 section, showing wall and window detail, facing N
Photo 10: Interior of 1947 section, showing wall and window detail, facing N
Photo 11: Interior of 1947 section, showing pulley system and remaining turbine, facing E
Photo 12: Pulley system, facing S
Photo 13: Turbine and office cubicle, facing W
Photo 14: Interior of office, facing S
Photo 15: Basement – where pulley system enters basement, facing N
Photo 16: Overview of basement, facing SE
Photo 17: Stairwell to second story offices, facing W

View from NE



NORTH ELEVATION





North Entrance

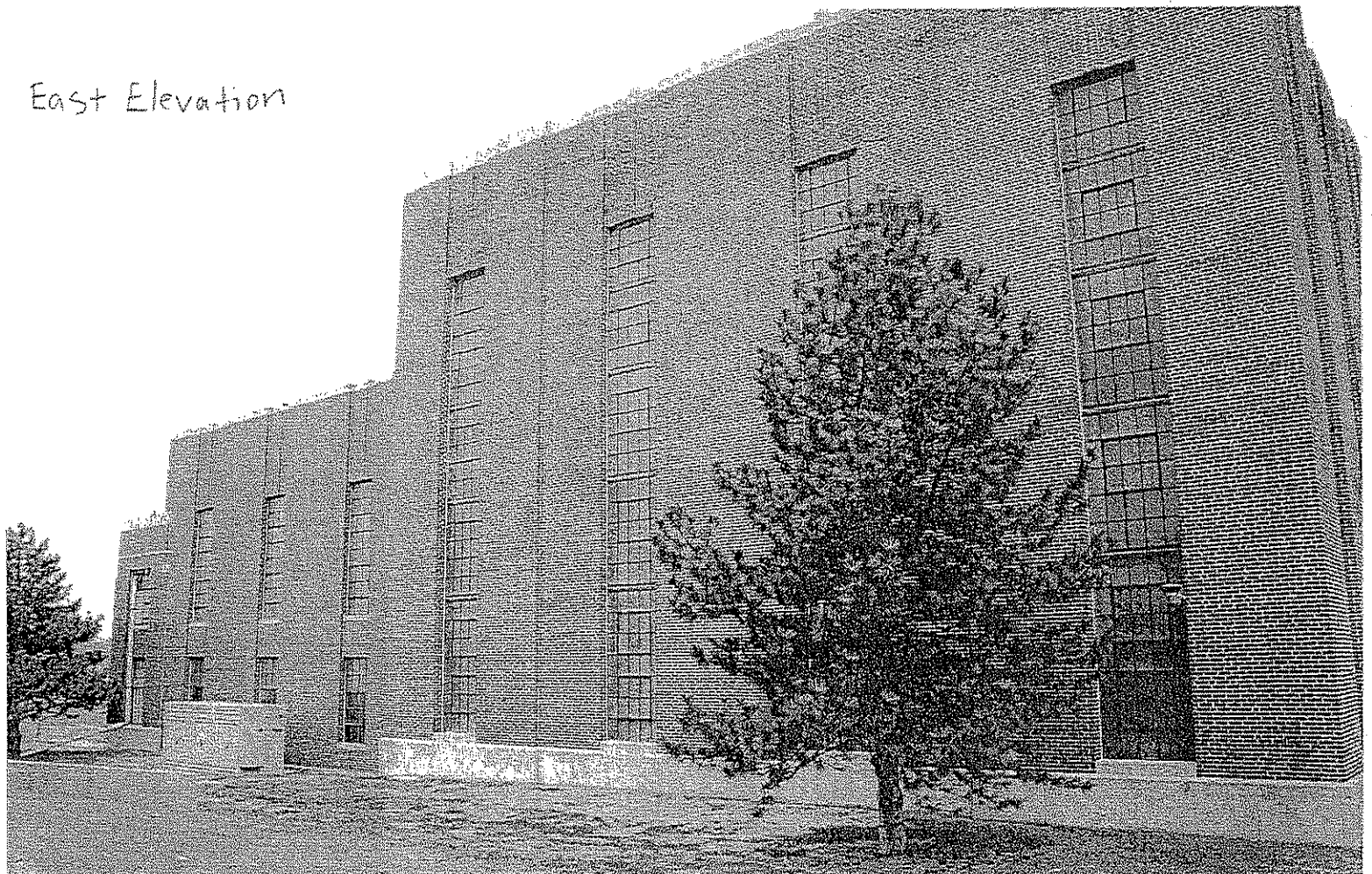
West Elevation
View from SW

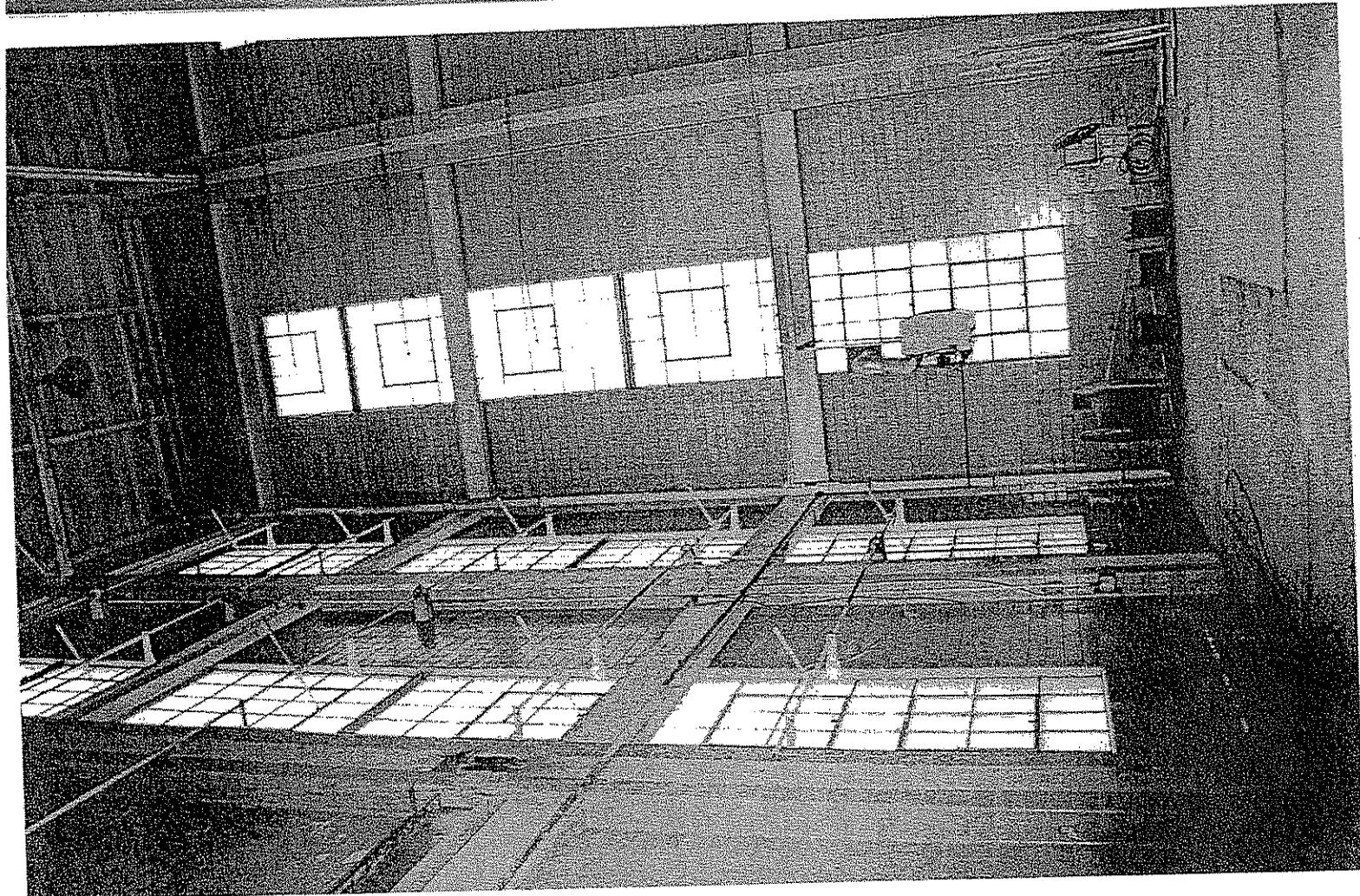
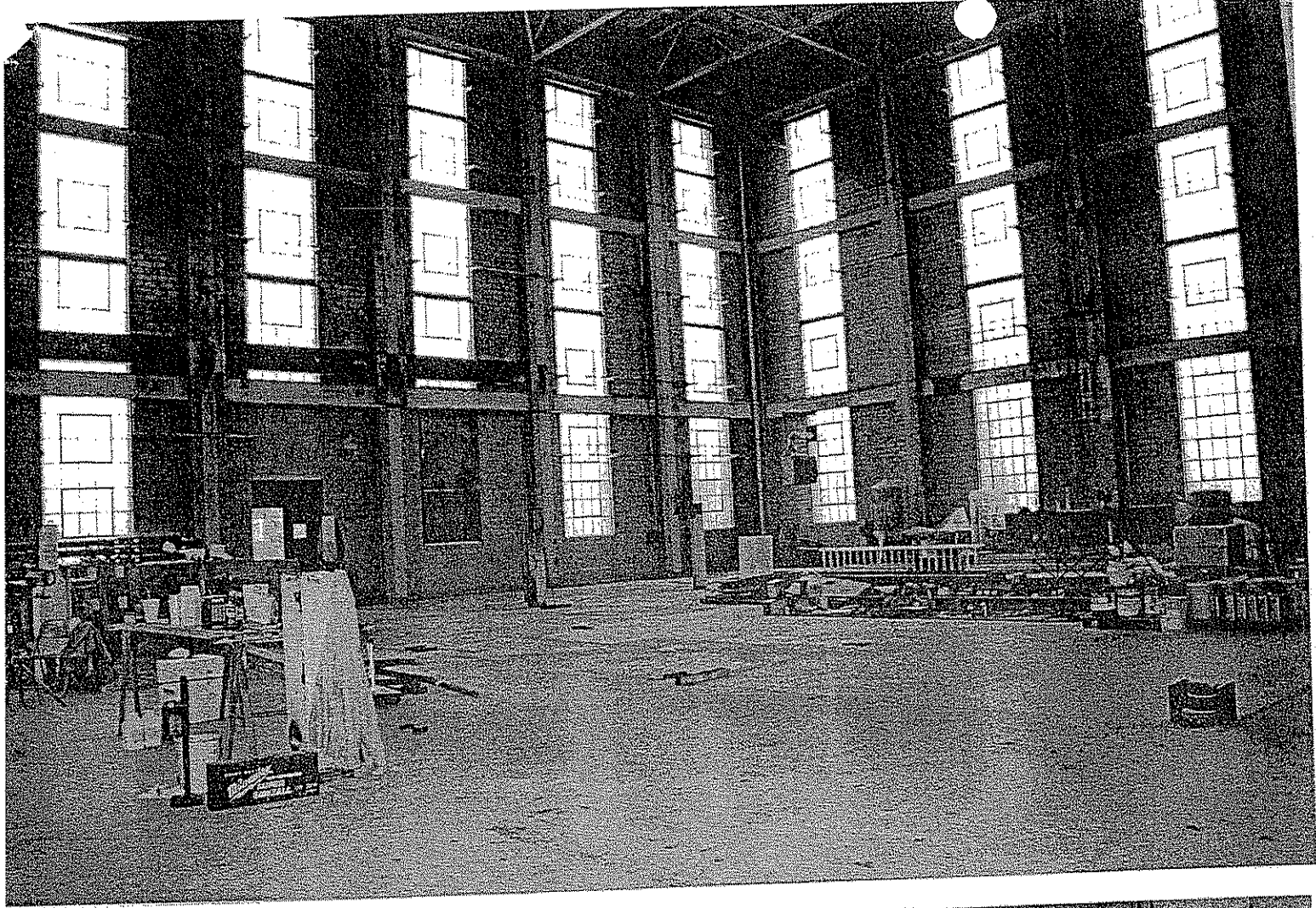


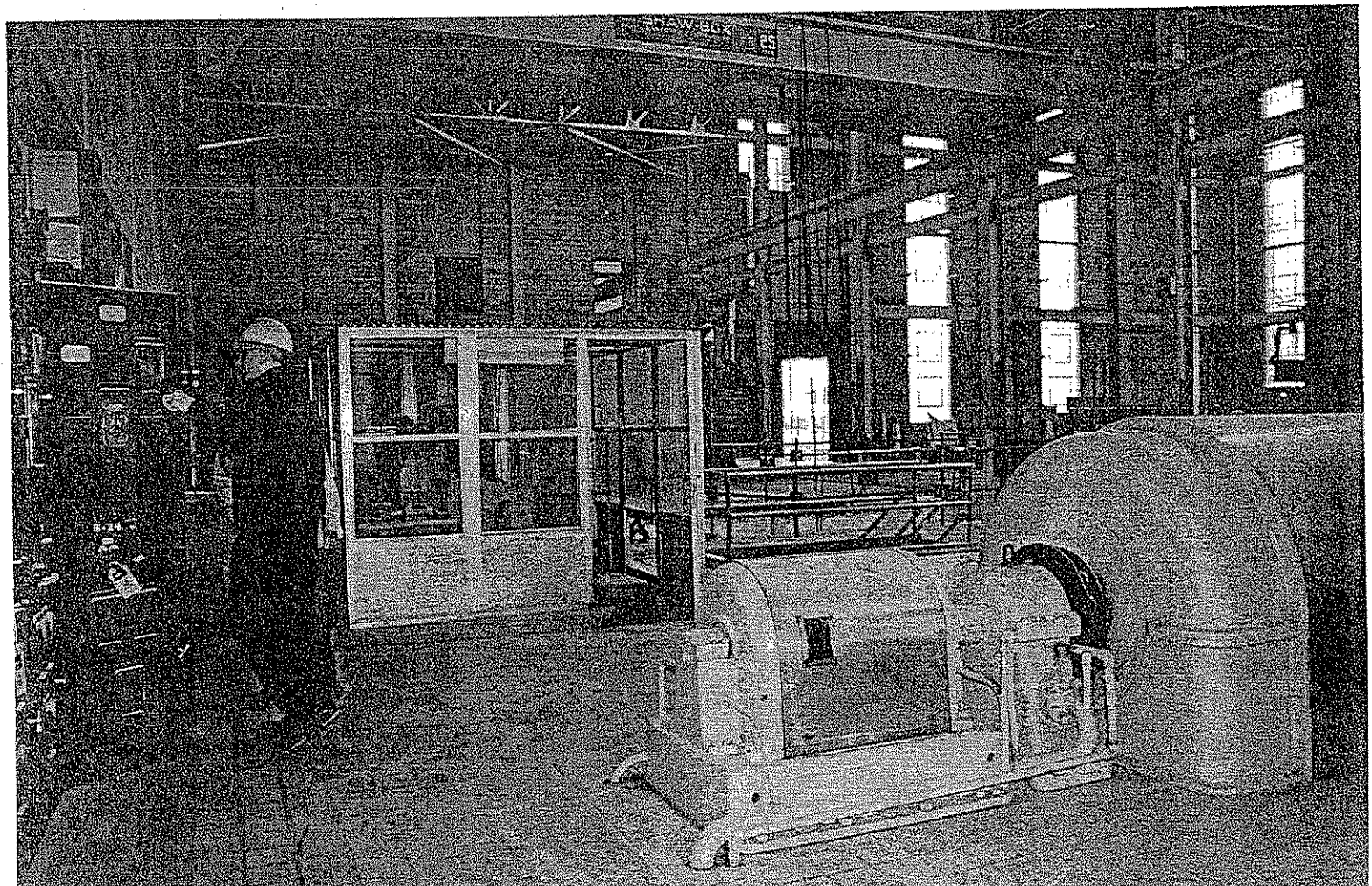
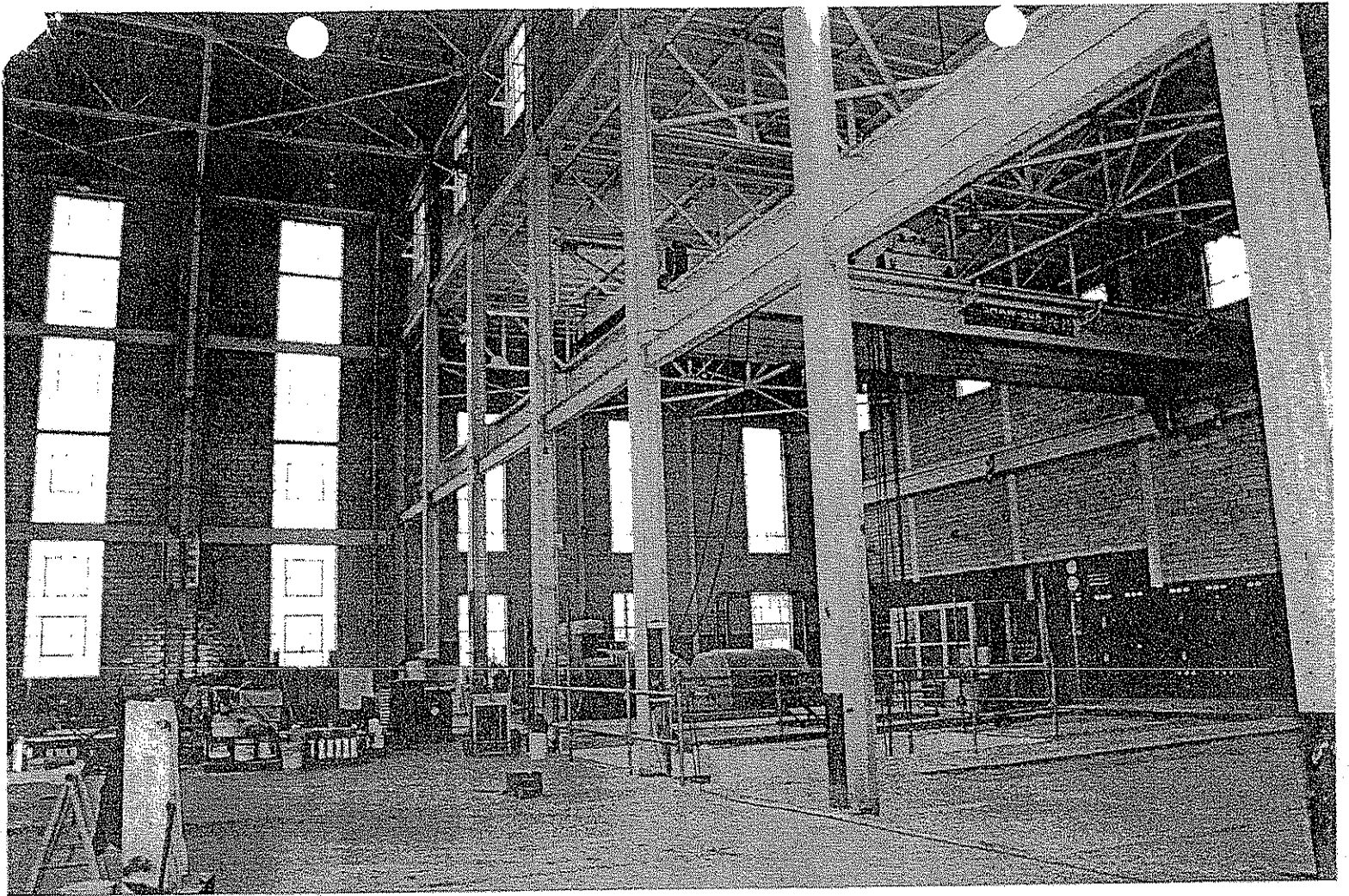
South Elevation

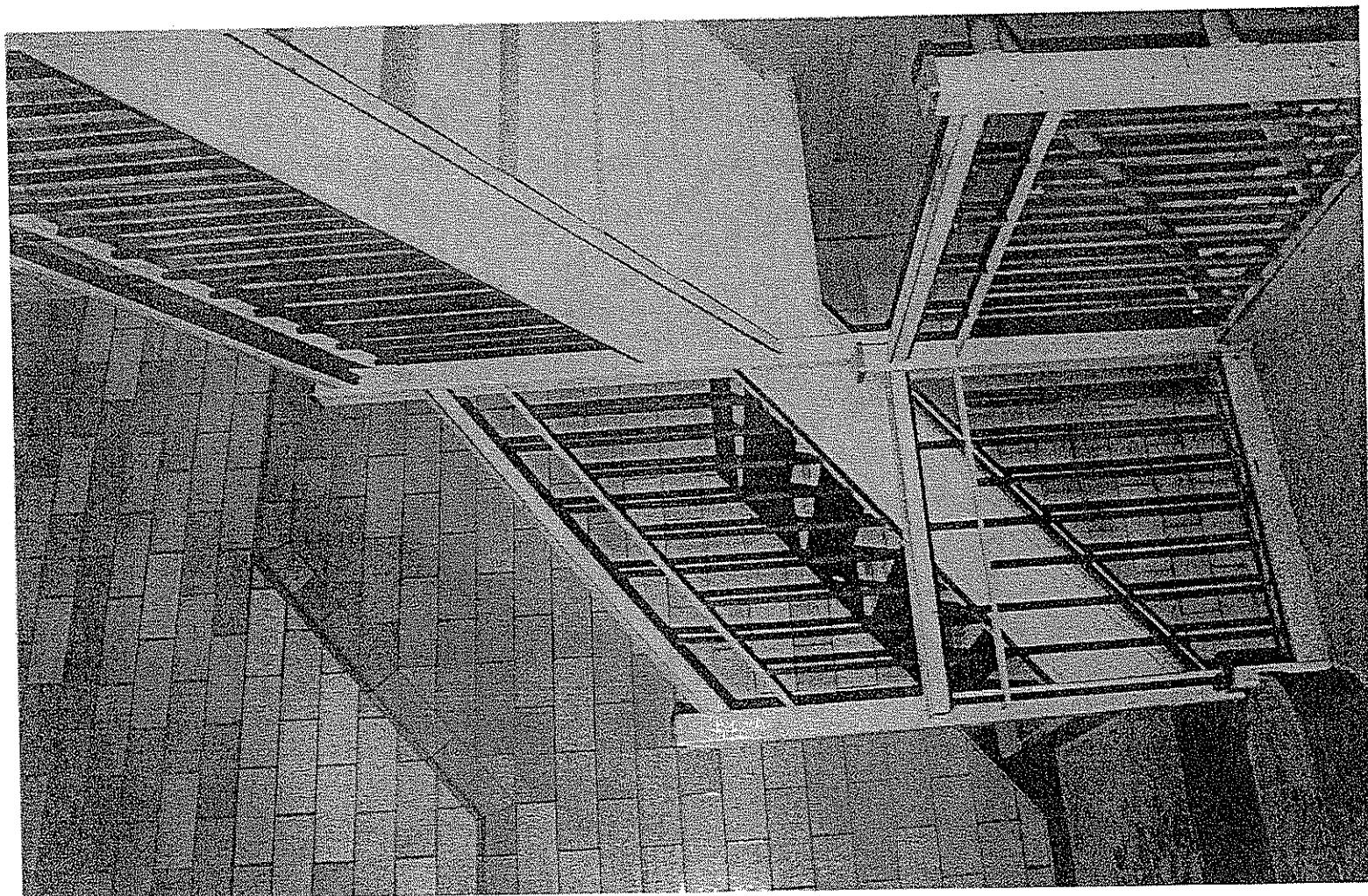
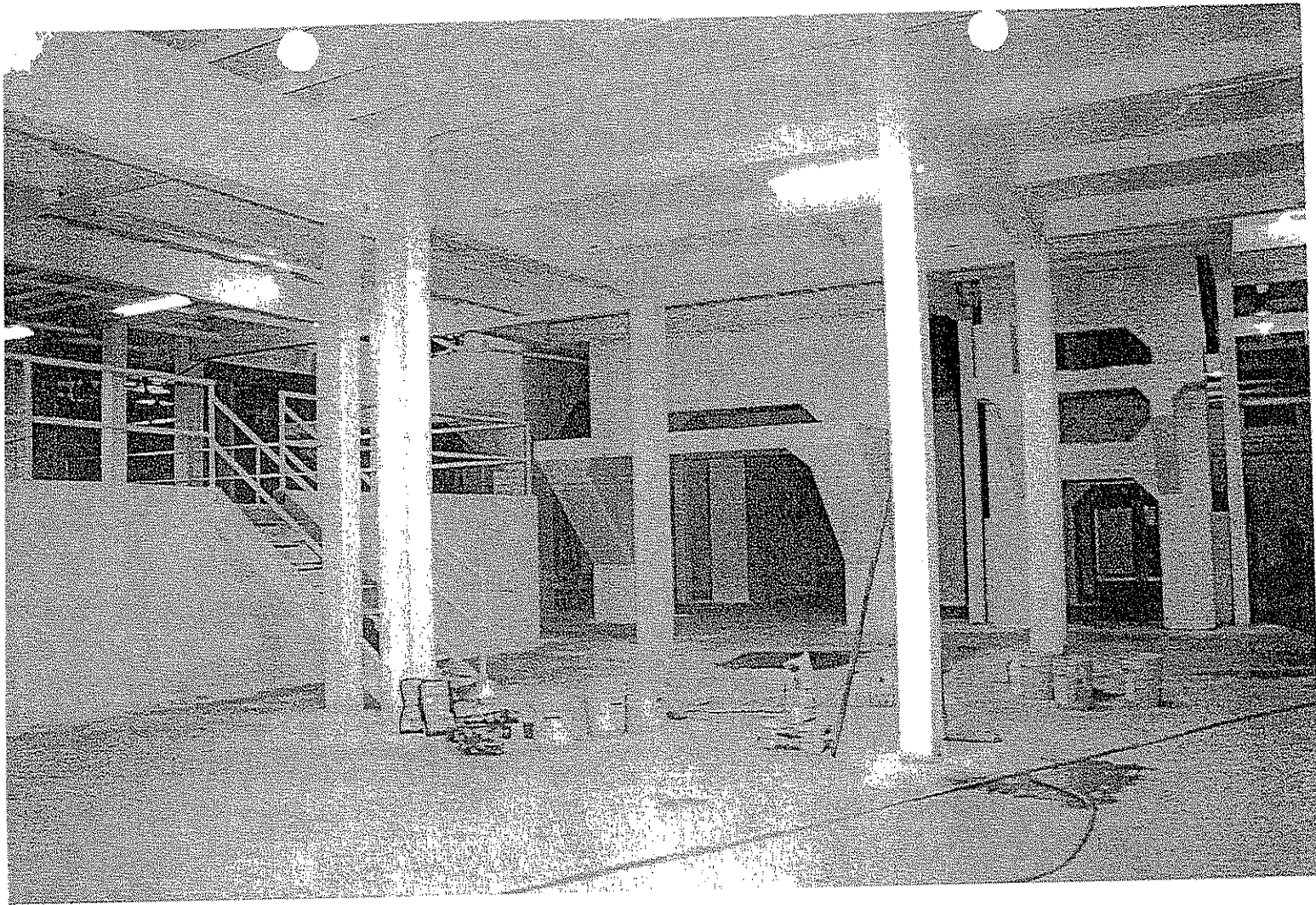


East Elevation









KANSAS AVE



P02

174'



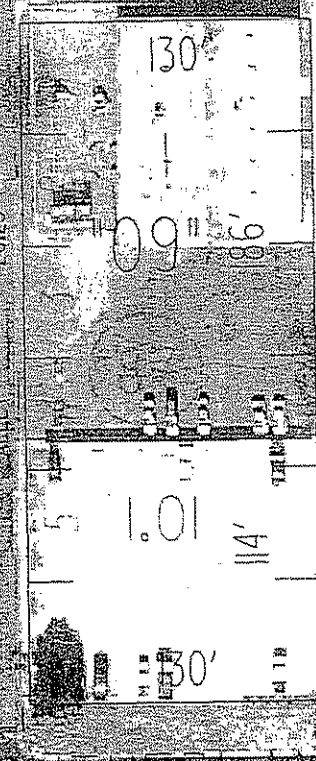
UNION PACIFIC RAILWAY



688'

375.5'

26.25'



130'

09'

1.01'

30'

CHESTNUT STREET

Nominated
Property

MC PHERSON SOUTH QUADRANGLE
KANSAS—MC PHERSON CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

